



Gender equitable and inclusive climate action planning

CASE STUDIES & PRACTICAL TOOLS

CASE STUDIES

1

Co-creating climate action in informal settlements – the urban lab in Barrio 20

Buenos Aires, Argentina

People living in informal settlements are particularly at risk from climate hazards due to poor infrastructure, limited green space, overcrowding, unsafe locations, and the often low socioeconomic status of residents. In the informal settlement of Barrio 20 in Buenos Aires—home to 9,600 families, the Transformative Urban Coalitions (TUC) project was launched in 2021 to address these challenges.

In addition to issues related to informality and inadequate infrastructure, the lack of vegetation and insufficient shade in new developments, combined with rising temperatures, has led to local temperatures soaring well above the citywide average. To address these conditions, the Urban Lab was established as a collaborative workspace for implementing innovative and sustainable climate solutions. TUC integrates climate action into a broader urban upgrading process through this approach. The initiative brings together residents, government departments, academics, and professionals to co-develop practical responses to local climate challenges.

A key innovation was the installation of temperature and humidity sensors, which are managed directly by trained community members. Using accessible digital tools like Power BI, residents collect and share climate data, identify localized vulnerabilities, and lead data-informed decision-making in their community.

Based on this data, four pilot interventions were co-designed and implemented by local cooperatives, community groups, and schools. These included shaded pergolas in areas unsuitable for trees, rain gardens, native species planting, and permeable surfaces. Nature-based solutions were prioritized for their affordability, adaptability, and potential for ongoing

community maintenance. Training programs and awareness campaigns supported long-term engagement and local capacity building.

The initiative also supported income generation and strengthened collaboration among local actors. The success of the Urban Lab in Barrio 20 has led to its replication in other settlements of Buenos Aires.





2

Be Eco – It is your choice

Nisporeni, Moldova

In the Municipality of Nisporeni, Moldova, the initiative 'Be Eco – It is your choice' was launched through a partnership between the local government and youth volunteers from the community's youth center. The project engaged young people aged 14 to 18 in environmental action.

A group of eight girls took the lead in planning, organizing, and mobilizing a clean-up of the Nirnova River, a local waterway affected by pollution. Their efforts involved 125 students from two high schools who joined to remove significant waste from the area. This youth-led, peer-to-peer engagement not only improved the local environment but also empowered the girls as community organizers.

Following this success, the project has expanded to involve the elderly, through a partnership with a local elderly center. This intergenerational approach strengthens community collaboration around climate action and environmental stewardship.

Overall, 'Be Eco – It is Your Choice' demonstrates how youth engagement and multi-level partnerships can drive local environmental conservation and foster shared responsibility.

3

Caregiving women: hearts that care

Despeñaderos, Córdoba, Argentina

Caregiving women: hearts that care initiative transforms unpaid caregiving, primarily carried out by women, into an opportunity for economic independence and environmental action. This project supports women caregivers, many in vulnerable situations (e.g. single mothers, unemployed, without support networks), by creating a collective workshop space where they can connect, access training, and engage in textile recycling. The project is led by the NGO Fundación Espacios, with strong leadership support from the Mayor of Córdoba.

Participants collect discarded fabric from local haberdasheries, sewing centers, and schools, partnered through donation schemes, and upcycle these materials into marketable textile products. The project integrates emotional and social support, with trained facilitators, psychologists, and social workers guiding the sessions. This approach recognizes care work as a foundation for empowerment and builds confidence, peer support, and green job skills among women.

The initiative prioritizes sustainability by promoting textile circularity, reducing waste, and raising environmental awareness. Products are sold in community fairs and public events, strengthening local economies and the visibility of women-led, climate-conscious entrepreneurship.

Key outcomes include improved self-esteem and financial autonomy among caregivers, greater community understanding of recycling practices, and new partnerships across the public and private sectors. The project is supported by the Municipality of Despeñaderos and linked to Córdoba's Green Fabric Centre, ensuring a continuous supply of recycled materials.

By centering care, the environment, and economic empowerment, this case study demonstrates a scalable model that addresses gender inequality, fosters sustainable local development, and builds resilience in communities often overlooked in traditional economic structures.



4

From the margins to the center: women's economic inclusion in Mezitli

Mezitli municipality, Turkiye

The Mezitli female producers' market is a pioneering initiative launched in 2014 by the Mezitli municipality in southern Turkiye. It addresses gender inequality, economic inclusion, and sustainability by transforming access to local markets for women, especially those from low-income, rural, and migrant backgrounds.

Mezitli, a fast-growing Mediterranean municipality, has seen rapid urbanization alongside continued agricultural activity and a high influx of Syrian refugees. In this context, women, particularly those traditionally dependent on male relatives, faced barriers to economic independence and public participation.

The project established nine neighborhood markets exclusively for female producers, offering free stalls, utilities, and institutional support. The only requirement: women must live in Mezitli and produce their own goods, ranging from food and textiles to crafts. This inclusive model empowers Turkish and refugee women alike to participate in the local economy, often for the first time.

Through partnerships with NGOs and civil society groups, over 650 women received training on sustainable production, health, rights, marketing, and climate-conscious farming. A dedicated municipal monitoring team, composed of women, ensures fair pricing and food quality, strengthening local access to affordable, nutritious food.

The market model has helped women gain financial autonomy, social confidence, and community visibility. Many now own vehicles, hold driver's licenses, and support their families independently. The initiative also challenges patriarchal norms by normalizing women's public roles as producers and leaders.

5

Kesawan Old Town revitalization: inclusive low emission zone for sustainable heritage and mobility

Medan, Indonesia

The Kesawan Old Town revitalization project in Medan, Indonesia transformed the city's heritage district and only Transit-Oriented Development into a Low Emission Zone (LEZ) focused on inclusivity, accessibility, and sustainability. While aiming to boost economic activity and tourism, the project's core goal was to create a safe and welcoming environment for all users, especially women, people with disabilities, seniors, and other marginalized groups. At the same time, the project launched an electric Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system to reduce energy use and greenhouse gas emissions.

A people-centered approach guided the design and implementation, ensuring the diverse needs of local residents were prioritized. Safety concerns commonly raised by women in urban spaces were addressed through better lighting, improved visibility, and the creation of active street frontages that increase social surveillance and reduce opportunities for harassment. Accessibility features were integrated across pedestrian paths and BRT stations, including tactile paving, ramps, audio announcements, and designated wheelchair spaces, supporting mobility for people with disabilities. The entire area was designated a safe school zone to protect children, while seniors benefited from barrier-free sidewalks.

Community participation was fundamental to the project's success. Public consultations involved women's groups, disability organizations, street vendors, and heritage associations, whose input ensured that the revitalization responded to local realities and needs. Construction included widening sidewalks, installing guiding tiles, and building universally accessible BRT shelters.

Since completion, Kesawan Old Town has seen significant improvements in pedestrian comfort and safety, particularly for vulnerable groups, alongside economic revitalization benefiting micro and small businesses, many run by women. Heritage conservation efforts have also enhanced the area's appeal to tourists. The LEZ has contributed to cleaner air and supports Medan's climate goals by lowering transportation-related emissions.

6

Implementation of door-to-door selective waste collection

Serra Talhada, Pernambuco, Brazil

The Recicla Serra Talhada project, launched in Serra Talhada, Pernambuco, Brazil aimed to organize selective waste collection while promoting the social and economic inclusion of waste pickers, with a particular focus on women facing social vulnerability. Recognizing the historic marginalization of women in the sector, gender inclusion was embedded as a core principle from the outset.

Over two years, a detailed social diagnosis identified vulnerable waste pickers, prioritizing women heads of households for cooperative membership. The cooperative's incubation phase included tailored training in technical skills, management, and gender equity, alongside establishing safe, inclusive working conditions. In 2023, the election of a female cooperative president marked a key milestone, reinforcing women's leadership within governance structures.

By 2024, women comprised over 60% of cooperative members, many transitioning from informal, precarious work to formalized roles with improved dignity and financial stability. The cooperative adapted its facilities to women's needs and fostered a respectful work environment, addressing discrimination and harassment through ongoing training.

The project processed 584 tons of recyclable materials by the end of 2024, significantly reducing landfill waste and greenhouse gas emissions. Over 300 environmental education activities engaged nearly 10,000 community members.

Institutionally, the project influenced public policy, establishing selective waste collection as a socially inclusive priority with strong cooperative governance.

7

Safe and inclusive markets for women vendors in Port Moresby

Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea

In Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, women constitute about 80% of market vendors, many relying on selling fresh produce to support themselves and their families. Single mothers and widows face heightened vulnerabilities due to social stigma and limited economic opportunities. Market spaces have historically exposed women to violence, including sexual harassment and assault.

A 2011 UN Women study found that 55% of women vendors experienced sexual violence in markets over the previous year. Poor infrastructure, such as inadequate sanitation, storage facilities, and displacement to unsafe locations, increased these risks.

Since then, Gerehu Market has undergone significant improvements, including renovated stalls, improved sanitation, shaded areas, and access to clean water. Cashless payment systems were introduced to reduce extortion, and a market vendors' association was formed to strengthen women's leadership. A referral system for survivors of violence is being piloted.

Recognizing that many women carry caregiving responsibilities, two libraries will be established at Gerehu and Gordons markets to provide safe, supportive spaces for vendors' children.

Planned upgrades to Gordons Market include expanded space, new buildings, and improved drainage. These initiatives promote safer, more inclusive market environments that enhance women's economic participation.



8

Women involvement in neighborhood level waste management through waste collecting point system

Banda Aceh Indonesia

The Banda Aceh waste management project in Banda Aceh in Indonesia, operates at the neighborhood level through 38 Waste Collecting Points (WCPs) across 19 villages, with strong leadership from women, particularly housewives. Rooted in local traditions where women manage household responsibilities, this community-led initiative has transformed waste management by promoting cleanliness, eliminating illegal dumping, and boosting women's participation.

Women lead the daily operations of the WCPs, which are built within residential areas, enabling hands-on involvement in managing domestic waste. The project advances 3R practices: reduce, reuse, recycle - and integrates community gardening, fostering sustainable livelihoods and environmental stewardship.

The project engages around 800 women managing waste from 20 to 30 households per depo. Sixteen active waste banks recycle roughly one ton of recyclable materials monthly and convert two tons of organic waste into fertilizer, which nourishes village gardens producing organic vegetables for collective use and sale.

This approach has improved environmental health by reducing landfill waste and illegal dumping, while empowering women economically and socially. The community-led model strengthens social cohesion and accountability, ensuring that waste management is sustainable and locally adapted.

By prioritizing inclusivity, the project actively involves women, people with disabilities, and vulnerable groups, challenging traditional barriers and promoting equal participation.





9

Climate village program

Jayapura City, Indonesia

Since 2021, Indonesia's Climate Village Program (ProKlim) has engaged 32 community groups, with women making up more than 73% of participants. The program aims to increase public understanding of climate change and its impacts, foster community independence in adaptation efforts, and strengthen collaboration at national and regional levels.

The program begins by monitoring and collecting data on local climate-related activities, followed by engaging village leaders, women's and youth organizations, and other community groups to raise awareness about climate change and the ProKlim initiative. Community members interested in participating form groups that are formally recognized by local government decree. These groups then receive capacity-building support through training in skills such as organic composting and sewing. They also benefit from tools and resources like sewing machines and waste shredders and participate in environmental activities such as tree planting and clean-up campaigns.

ProKlim supports local economies by purchasing products made by community groups, including bags crafted from recycled fabric and scoops made from repurposed jerry cans, helping members generate income.

Outcomes include strengthened community capacity to design climate adaptation activities based on local needs, improved disaster risk reduction, enhanced food security, and the promotion of low-carbon lifestyles.



10

Voices of women affected on climate-related disasters

Ankara, Turkiye

This project documents the specific risks faced by women and girls during climate-related disasters and displacement. By collecting first-hand accounts, it builds an evidence base that highlights how gender shapes vulnerability and resilience in crisis situations.

The stories shared by women and girls expose the gaps in existing emergency responses, from lack of access to safe shelter and healthcare to increased exposure to violence and loss of livelihoods. These accounts help make visible the everyday realities of climate impacts, which are often excluded from formal data sets and risk assessments.

Storytelling is used not only to raise awareness but also to identify recurring themes across different experiences. This supports cities and local governments in understanding the gendered dimensions of climate risk and setting more inclusive adaptation goals. By grounding climate action in lived experience, the project strengthens efforts to plan for and respond to future emergencies in ways that meet the needs of those most affected.

11

Women's participation in urban planning and livelihoods

Monrovia, Liberia

Monrovia's Urban Development Strategy is guided by various strategic principles, including inclusivity, resilience and sustainability. This approach ensures that urban transformation addresses the needs of all residents, especially women and marginalized communities. The strategy focuses on promoting gender equality, increasing participation and fostering ownership of city planning processes through a series of key transformative projects covering short- and medium-term interventions.

Among these projects, the Women's Safety Audit sought to identify and address gendered risks in public spaces, improving safety and mobility for women. The creation of a Citizens' Advisory Group aimed to ensure that women and other underrepresented groups had a direct voice in urban decision making. The Urban Women's Livelihood Support Project provided vocational training, business development support, seed grants and safe childcare services to empower women to achieve economic independence and resilience.

To support these initiatives, a Comprehensive Communication Strategy was developed. This strategy recognized the diverse ways that residents, especially women in informal settlements, access information. By tailoring communication methods, Monrovia sought to foster transparency, inclusivity and broad community engagement in the urban development process.

Anchored in these principles, the strategy takes a holistic approach to urban development by centering the needs and voices of women and fostering a more equitable and climate-resilient future for the city.

12

Integrating gender & inclusion into climate and strategic municipal planning

Ukraine

The Covenant of Mayors East (CoM East), in partnership with national and international stakeholders, conducted an analysis of how gender and inclusion (G&I) considerations are integrated into climate and strategic planning across five Ukrainian municipalities. Based on this work, tailored recommendations were developed to strengthen the mainstreaming of G&I issues within municipal frameworks. These recommendations have been shared widely among CoM signatory municipalities and at the national level through public events and workshops.

This initiative played a key role in supporting Ukraine's new national mandate requiring municipalities to develop gender-responsive strategic documents. It has helped embed a cross-cutting G&I perspective within Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans and other local development strategies.

The city of Kalush was an active participant in this process and offers valuable insights from its experience with conducting gender analyses and integrating these findings into strategic city documents.

13

Safety assessment walk

Nairobi, Kenya

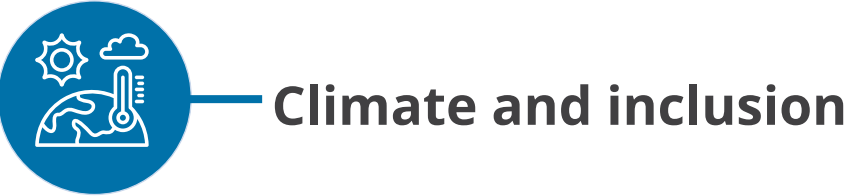
In March 2002, Nairobi City Council, in partnership with UN-Habitat and the Intermediate Technology Development Group (ITDG), conducted the Nairobi Safety assessment walk. This pilot project aimed to develop a women's safety audit toolkit for use across the city. The assessment identified four critical factors affecting women's safety: lighting and visibility, physical design and maintenance, population concentration, and social and economic activities. Encouraged by the pilot's success, the safety audits were expanded citywide, guiding urban planning practices and improving public spaces to better support women's safety.

Key findings highlighted the need to address environmental conditions that increase insecurity. Areas with poor lighting and inadequate maintenance were identified as high-risk zones. Recommended interventions included upgrading street lighting, enhancing upkeep of public spaces, and designing environments that discourage crime. Beyond reducing risks, these measures aimed to empower women by fostering safe and inclusive spaces.

The initiative's participatory approach, which actively involved community members, particularly women, ensured that urban development responded directly to residents' real needs and concerns. This project exemplifies the value of multi-level partnerships and governance models that center women and marginalized groups in creating safer cities.

PRACTICAL TOOLS FOR CITIES

This is a non-exhaustive list of practical tools that complement the Gender Equitable and Inclusive Climate Action Planning Toolkit for Cities and Local Governments. Each resource supports cities in embedding gender and inclusion across planning, design, implementation, and evaluation. Whether you're just starting or building on existing work, these tools can help translate inclusive principles into action.



Tool / Resource	Developed by	Format
C40 Inclusive Climate Action Toolkit	C40 Cities	Guide + Worksheets
C40 Inclusive Climate Action Planning Guide	C40 Cities	Guide + Worksheets
C40 ICA: Conducting a City Needs Assessment	C40 Cities	How-to Guide
C40 ICA: Designing Actions with an Equity Lens	C40 Cities	How-to Guide
C40 ICA: Monitoring and Evaluating Inclusive Actions	C40 Cities	How-to Guide
C40 ICA: Policy Recommendations	C40 Cities	Policy Brief
The Her4Climate Tool	Cities Alliance	Assessment Framework
Her4WEFE toolkit	Cities Alliance	Toolkit
Her4Water tool	Cities Alliance	Toolkit

Equitable Transitions Guidebook : Local tools for fair and inclusive sustainability programs	International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives	How-to Guide
INCLU:DE Climate Equity Toolbox - ICLEI : A how-to guide for making municipal subsidy programs more socially just	International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives	How-to Guide
Climate Action Guidance for Organisations of Persons with Disabilities : guide for ensuring disability inclusion in climate adaptation and resilience planning.	CBM Global Disability Inclusion	How-to Guide
Toolkit on Disability Inclusive Climate Action	European Disability Forum	Tools and Best Practices



Tool / Resource	Developed by	Format
The Women Engagement in Cities Framework (WEC)	Cities Alliance	Assessment Framework
The Checklist for Mainstreaming Gender in Urban Projects Based on a Participatory Approach	Cities Alliance	Guide + Checklist
Gender Inclusive Participatory Approach – Overview on co-creating gender-responsive climate and energy projects with stakeholders; participatory tools and case studies	International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives Africa (2022)	Guide
Her City Toolbox	UN-Habitat & Global Utmaning	Toolbox
UN-Habitat Youth 2030 Strategy : empowering youth as agents of change in sustainable development and climate action.	UN-Habitat	Framework



Urban planning and design

Tool / Resource	Developed by	Format
The Women-Friendly Urban Planning Toolkit from Cities of the Global South	Cities Alliance	Toolkit
Handbook for Gender-Inclusive Urban Planning and Design	World Bank (2021)	Handbook
Gender Analysis for Project Development – Resource to embed gender analysis at project identification phase for inclusive outcomes	GlZ, International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives, Africa (2022)	Guide
Creating Places that Work for Women and Girls. Handbook for Local Governments, Developers and Designers	London Legacy Development Corporation (2024)	Toolkit
Inclusive Design Standards	London Legacy Development Corporation (2025)	Guidance
Handbook for Gender-Inclusive Urban Planning and Design	The World Bank (2020)	Handbook
This Is For The Majority, From Theory To Practice. A design framework for gender inclusive design	London Borough, Tower Hamlets (2024)	Guidance + Framework



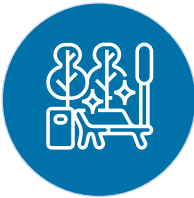
Gender mainstreaming

Tool / Resource	Developed by	Format
Vienna Gender Mainstreaming Checklists	City of Vienna	Checklist



Budgeting and governance

Tool / Resource	Developed by	Format
UN Women Gender Budgeting Handbook	UN Women	Handbook
OECD Gender Budgeting Toolkit	Organisation for Economic Co-peration and Development	Toolkit
Gender Budgeting European Institute for Gender Equality	European Institute for Gender Equality	Toolkit
Using Digital Solutions to Address Barriers to Female Entrepreneurship	World Bank	Diagnostic + Guidance Toolkit



Others

Tool / Resource	Developed by	Format
Cultivating Inclusive and Green Transport	WSP (2024)	White paper
Plan International Safer Cities Toolkit	Plan International	Toolkit
Delivering Women’s Safety Audits	We Made That (2024)	How-to Guide
Women’s Night Safety Charter (London)	Greater London Authority	Charter + Tools
Safer Parks For Women And Girls Guidance	The Safer Parks Consortium (2023)	Guidance



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